

THE LOGGING INDUSTRY IN CANADA

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1950, less than 1 per cent of the total pulp-wood cut east of the Rocky Mountains was done with power saws. By 1954-55, power saws were used to cut well over 50 per cent of all pulp-wood. Some companies now cut 80-90 per cent of their wood in this way.

The widespread acceptance of the power saw and the increasing importance of mechanical equipment for hauling, yarding, loading and barking have resulted in increased production and higher earnings per man-day. While no precise trends in productivity are discernible from data available on logging employment and output during the 1930's and 1940's, it is clear that during the past five years or so output per man-day has increased. A similar trend seems to have occurred on farm woodlots for a parallel process of mechanization has taken place there with the farmer using some of the same tools for cutting pulp wood as are used by logging firms.

LONGER CYCLE

Partly as a result of these developments, the annual logging cycle during the past few years has begun more than a month earlier than formerly, reaching its peak, as mentioned above, in October-November. There is now more summer cutting, but since all requirements cannot be met in the summer and since much of the hauling is still done in the winter, the periods of operation have grown longer.

The fact that logging in Eastern Canada has had a seasonal pattern running counter to that of most other industries and the fact that it is carried on over a large section of the country have given logging an importance out of proportion to the numbers involved in its labour force. This industry has been counted on to absorb many of the seasonally unemployed during the winter months. The reduction of seasonal employment variations and the advancement of the winter peak employment period in logging may therefore reduce this alternative employment opportunity for a large group of workers unless seasonal variations are reduced simultaneously in all industries, including agriculture and fishing.

Recent developments in logging, apart from their effects on the seasonal pattern, have also affected both average length of stay of the workers in the woods per logging season and the labour turnover rate. This is particularly evident in Ontario, where the average length of stay in forest work in the 1951-52 season was 54 days, compared with 79 days in 1955-56. Turnover declined in line with duration of stay. No similar trends can be detected in the other areas of Eastern Canada at the present time. The average number of days per calendar year per man is slightly less than it was during the 40's, although the length of operation has been expanding. In the Province of Quebec it was about 41 days in 1955. The

reason for this seems to be that the numbers of short-term workers are proportionately so great that they more than counteract an increasing number of longer-term workers. High turnover of labour within the operating season still remains a concern to the industry.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Logging in British Columbia, which employs less than one-fifth of all forest workers in Canada, is carried on throughout most of the year.

Summer and fall are the periods of highest employment. From 1947 to 1951 the seasonal employment peak was reached about October 1. In 1951 and 1952 the seasonal pattern was not as clear, mainly because of forest fires and industrial disputes, but during the 1953-1955 period, employment was at peak levels from about July to November.

The slack period is in the winter months, when snow hampers highly mechanized operations. Camps in some of the interior areas are forced to restrict work in the spring, when road conditions, following thaws, make trucking difficult. In dry and hot years, fire hazard during the summer months is likely to cause work stoppages.

Logging operations in coastal British Columbia, where trees are on the whole larger than in Eastern Canada, are much less seasonal, mainly because of favourable weather conditions and the almost complete mechanization of cutting and transporting operations. These operations have been mechanized to a great extent for at least three decades, in contrast to the system in Eastern Canada.

The chief product is lumber, although the postwar trend towards more diversified processing has promoted the rapid expansion of the pulp and paper industry. Nevertheless, lumber production is still setting the pattern for British Columbia logging employment.

The labour force consists mainly of local, permanent loggers, a large proportion of whom are highly skilled. This source of labour is supplemented by immigrants, farmers and recruits from other provinces. There is also a definite movement of workers each spring from mining to logging and some fishermen log in the off season. Labour turnover is considerably less than in Eastern Canada, although it is relatively high compared with many other industries.

One of the most important developments affecting logging employment in British Columbia has been the rapid growth of the industry in interior areas. While in 1945 logging in the interior of British Columbia accounted for less than one-fifth of the province's total cut, in 1955 it produced more than one-third, and is still rapidly increasing.

Coastal logging is approaching the capacity permissible under the sustained yield management policy of the provincial government. In interior British Columbia, on the other hand, available resources still allow for expansion